

sible access to U.S. and European markets, which we expect will be a major theme of the G-7 summit. President Gonsz expressed his gratitude for U.S. understanding and support. In this context, the two Presidents also agreed on the importance for

the successful conclusion of the Uruguay round.

The two leaders also discussed nationalities conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as transformations in the Soviet Union.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Annual Report on Radiation Control for Health and Safety

May 23, 1991

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 360D of the Public Health Service Act (21 U.S.C. 360qq), I am submitting the report of the Department of Health and Human Services regarding the administration of the Radiation Control for Health and Safety Act of 1968 during calendar year 1990.

The report recommends the repeal of section 360D of the Public Health Service Act that requires the completion of this annual report. All the information found in

this report is available to the Congress on a more immediate basis through Center technical reports, the Radiological Health Bulletin, and other publicly available sources. This annual report serves little useful purpose and diverts Agency resources from more productive activities.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
May 23, 1991.

Remarks to the National Retail Federation

May 23, 1991

Good morning. Thank you very much. Please be seated. It's great to have you all here at the White House. It's good to see Bill Howell behind me here, and Tracy Mullin. And of course, Boyden Gray you heard from—one of our top people in the White House, my friend of long standing, our general counsel who follows the issues that I'm sure you're interested in very, very closely. I'm pleased to see Jack, Jack Schultz here, and delighted to be with you.

The federation, your federation, has supported our administration, as I think you all know, on a wide range of topics. And I wanted at the outset of these remarks just to express my appreciation for that and obviously ask, while I have this much horsepower here, for your continued support. But let me just talk about an issue today that is of importance to every person in

this room, I'd say, transcending importance. And the subject is economic growth. It affects everybody in the country, including and especially perhaps the 16 million workers that you represent.

While there's some disagreement about the length and the depth of the recession, we've got to commit ourselves to policies that are going to promote growth and opportunity that will carry us right into the next century.

Incidentally, on the recession, I'm feeling more confident about the fact that we're—if not have bottomed out, are bottoming out. And I think there's an awful lot of economic forecasters that would agree with what I've just said.

Our growth package can do this. It can guarantee prosperity into the future and it can put us on a long-term path to market-

driven economic growth. Our growth package begins—you might say, began—with trying to control Federal spending. Our budget agreement last year, over which I took a great deal of flak for understandable reasons, finally put the Federal Government on a pay-as-you-go basis, and it cut the growth of Federal debt by nearly \$500 billion over the next 5 years. And that extra capital, that extra capital, not being money spent by the Government, means more investment; it means more purchasing power.

The budget caps, I can tell you, are working. There's now some real, meaningful discipline in the Congress against the temptation to spend, spend, and spend. There's still an inclination on the part of some to do that, but you don't see as many spending bills coming down the pike at us as you would have without the spending caps that are effectively put on by the budget agreement.

To increase the private savings and investment, we've also proposed—and we're going to fight for them—tax-free family savings accounts and penalty-free withdrawals from these IRA's for first-time home buyers.

Our financial services reform bill—and I'm strongly committed to that, and I hope you'll help us work this through the Congress—will help modernize our financial system, change around the overlays of regulation, ensure the future strength of the financial system, and help finally to alleviate the tight credit conditions.

We proposed cutting the tax on long-term capital gains. And I'm absolutely convinced that that would spur job-creating investment in our economy. It would cut the Tax Code's bias in favor of debt. It would expand incentives to invest and give a leg up to those that perhaps need it the most but that generate the most jobs, and I'm talking about small businesses, the small entrepreneur. And it would keep the American dream alive—a guy could start something and see it succeed—it would facilitate that.

We're investing in R&D, up \$8.4 billion to \$76 billion. That's inclusive. That includes all research and development. That's still, even in Washington, a lot of money—\$76 billion, the highest level ever—which

will fuel even greater growth in the future.

You, the retailers, America's retailers, know better than most that Government regulation shouldn't impose unnecessary burdens. We have a regulatory responsibility, but we must guard against unnecessary regulatory burdens on the working men and women. That's why the Vice President's Council on Competitiveness—and he's doing a superb job in this—will continue to review these regulations that massively come down the pike at us to ensure that regulatory benefits outweigh burdens by the widest margin possible.

And to the degree we were able over the past 10 years to cut back on regulatory excess, I would give great credit to Boyden Gray, who's sitting here with me. He took the lead on that when I chaired that Regulatory Relief Council for then President Reagan.

These proposals that I've just clicked off are only part of our action plan for a strong and healthy economy. We're looking beyond our borders for new opportunities in international markets. Over the past four decades, and especially in recent years, trade has kept our economy going strong. If there's any group in the country that understands that—anyone—I think it would be your group.

Merchandise exports have risen 73 percent in the last 4 years, more than twice the rate of import growth. Export business accounts for an increasing share of our economic growth. We've seen unparalleled growth in world trade and huge economic benefits for the United States.

Our trade strategy is not all that complicated. It's simple: The United States will continue to lead the world toward a system of free trade and open markets because it means economic growth; it means jobs for all Americans. And as the competition sorts out, it means that the American taxpayer or the American consumer has a better shot at paying less for goods.

As you know, we've asked Congress to extend the Fast Track procedures. These hold the key to good faith relations between the administration and Congress in trade matters and between our negotiators and their counterparts in these trade nego-

tiations.

We're expecting a final vote on Fast Track probably this afternoon, but anyone who takes it for granted that the vote is in the bag is wrong. We're going right down to the wire, and every vote counts. And so, when you sally forth from here, head directly to Capitol Hill—[laughter]—and gracefully lean on those who have not shown the wisdom on this matter that you've shown. We need your support, really, seriously, in these final hours and we can't win without the help of concerned Americans.

We've got to win this for a lot of reasons, for the domestic consumer, for our robust growth in trade. And we also need it for strong foreign policy reasons. You don't have the time to hear me on how enthusiastic I am about the changes taking place in Mexico, what that means for democracy, what Fast Track for Mexico means for the countries south of our border. Yesterday—or the day before yesterday it was Lacalle of Uruguay. Two weeks ago it was Carlos Andres Perez and Michael Manley—Perez of Venezuela and Manley heading the CARICOM [Caribbean Community] from Jamaica. Everyone of them saying, look, I don't benefit directly, but you must pass Fast Track negotiating authority. I can't tell you what a bad signal it would send to your friends and allies in fledgling democracies south of your border if you don't pass it.

So, in addition to what it will do for the American economy and American consumer, I am convinced that it has serious and a broad-based foreign policy ramifications.

The last thing I want to do is to stress that equal growth, equal economic growth—fair economic growth—and equal opportunity go hand-in-hand. I want to just clear the record here—it's not directly come under the heading of the Retail Federation, but I want to sign a civil rights bill this year. And I have sent a good, strong proposal that would battle discrimination in the workplace up to the Congress. And I don't hear any discussion of it when I read the newspapers. It's always about somebody else's bill that they want me to digest.

Unfortunately, the bill that I sent up is

being held hostage while Congress pushes a bill that is almost identical to the one that I felt that I had to veto last year. On Tuesday, we had an announcement of a Democratic compromise. But it was an announcement, no bill, no exact language. As far as our experts can tell—and some of this is highly technical—the changes that they're proposing are strictly cosmetic.

I do not want to veto another bill with the name "civil rights" on it. I think our administration has a good record on civil rights. I take pride in the fact that I personally have had understanding and a good record on civil rights. But I am not going to sign a bill that will foster quotas, directly or indirectly. You can put language in as it did in the last year saying this is not a quota bill, and then you have provisions in there that would have forced employers to accept quotas or undertake highly expensive and damaging legal costs in defending a position.

If the Congress is really serious—and I don't think it's the Congress as much as some of the groups outside—but if they are really serious and they want to take a step—maybe not as big a step as they'd like to see, but if they want to take a step against job discrimination in the workplace, a step that indeed does correct some of the decisions that many of us feel should be corrected from the Supreme Court, then I would ask that they pass my bill. It's a good bill. It's a fair bill. And it doesn't drive the small employer into a state of frenzy because of fearing mindless legislative action against him.

Then if we can do this, we can move forward in a constructive and bipartisan fashion to address the other elements of my program for expanding choice and opportunity.

So, these were the subjects I wanted to take up with you. I want to end, though, where I began. You know, the longer I am in this job, the more I am convinced that it is the outside forces, it's the people—and you represent them—the people that can make things happen. I am not jaundiced about government. I'm still optimistic. And I believe that we can make good things happen if we have the support of people like yourselves who are willing to take the

time to take your message, which in this instance happens to be our message, up to Capitol Hill. So, I really wanted to come over and thank not only your leaders but all of you for what you're doing. And I'm very grateful.

Today it's Fast Track. Yesterday it was something else. And tomorrow I'll be knocking on your door for support on something else again. But we have worked together, and I'm very, very grateful for that. Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to National Retail Federation officials W.R. Howell, chairman, Tracy Mullin, president of the government and public affairs division, and John J. Schultz, president of the retail services division and executive director; C. Boyden Gray, Counsel to the President; Vice President Dan Quayle, Chairman of the Council on Competitiveness; President Luis Alberto Lacalle of Uruguay; President Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela; and Prime Minister Michael Manley of Jamaica.

Remarks on Fast Track Legislation and a Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters

May 23, 1991

The President. I assume you want to get my reaction on Fast Track. And I want to simply thank the leaders in Congress on both sides of the aisle. I want to congratulate everyone in our administration who worked so hard on this: Nick Calio, Fred McClure, and of course, most especially, Ambassador Carla Hills, who worked her heart out on this.

And I believe this is a very important step for our country. I think it's a very important step for our neighbors to the south and, hopefully, for Europe as well. So I couldn't be more pleased. The vote was, frankly, larger than I anticipated, though I think I told you all yesterday I thought we would win. But it's a great day, it really is. And it's going to be good for the working man in this country and good for the environment, not the other way around.

So I congratulate the leaders of Congress. I want to single out Congressman Dan Rostenkowski on the House side for his leadership. And I just couldn't be happier. It's a wonderful, wonderful end-of-week present, you might say, for the American people.

Q. How pivotal do you think Mr. Gephardt's decision was in that margin?

The President. Very pivotal, because Dick Gephardt, who wrestled with this for rea-

sons I understood, came down, in my view, on the right side of it. And it wasn't an easy call for him. But he, in my view, made the right decision, and I'm confident that his decision brought along a lot of other votes because he's in the position of leader there and that's important.

The Speaker played it fair all the way. So I have nothing but praise for Congress on this one. And I'm just delighted it worked out that way.

President's Health

Q. Mr. President, is it true that you felt a little bit mentally slowed during your illness?

The President. Rita [Rita Beamish, Associated Press], can I turn the question around and say this: Did I seem a little mentally slow? Here, I'll tell you how it is. [Laughter]

Q. Did you feel mentally slow?

The President. Have you ever gotten tired—has anybody here ever been tired? And if you have, when you're tired it's better to take it easier, take a little time before you come up to try and answer a lot of tough questions. And so, yes, I've been tired, and the medicine is known to do that to people. But I'm back 100 percent, snapped back, and feel sharp as a tack and ready to field the most tough question and do it rapidly. [Laughter]